

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Inspiring futures



Lucy Taylor

Tell us about your job

Seed Collections Assistant.

Why is science important in your career?

A background in biology, botany and ecology is fundamental to my work in the MSB lab.

What is your average work day like?

Often, they are split in two, with different tasks in the morning and afternoon. I might be X-raying seeds collections in the morning, then counting them in the afternoon. Or I might assess some germination tests in the morning and then bank some collections in the afternoon. Once a week I spend a whole day in the cleaning lab, working on new seed collections. However, if a new batch of seeds is delivered, we drop everything to check the new arrivals.

Did you go to university? If so, what did you study? If not, what did you do after leaving school?

BSc Hons Ecology and Conservation, University of Sussex.

MSc Biodiversity Survey, University of Sussex.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I meet and work with partners from all over the world. The diversity of the seed collections is incredible. To know that I am helping to conserve them, as part of the world's largest *ex-situ* plant conservation project, is very rewarding. I love going overseas on seed collecting trips and running training courses.

What sort of personality traits do you have that help you in your career?

Good organisational skills and attention to detail. Willingness to be flexible and meet and work with new people.

What helped you get your role at Kew?

The lab-based skills, biology and ecology I learnt at university were important to the recruitment panel, but they were also interested to know what other skill sets I could bring to Kew.

In my previous job I worked as part of a dynamic team that interacted with people from all walks of life. Whatever role you play at Kew, you need to be able to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and deal with rapid changes in the pace of work.

Whilst at college I had a short work experience placement at the Millennium Seed Bank. I could prove that I had long-term interest in working for Kew, that I could successfully integrate with the team and that I could work safely in the labs.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career like yours?

Try to get some work experience.

Don't just focus purely on scientific skills and knowledge. Scientists need to be great communicators and collaborators too!

What do you want people to know about your work?

RBG Kew is part of the Civil Service! (DEFRA). What we do here in our lab in West Sussex is for the benefit for everyone.

Wakehurst is home to the largest *ex-situ* plant conservation project in the world! I am very proud to work here and with our project partners from over 80 countries across the globe.

No matter how bleak the news is about loss of biodiversity, climate change etc, I can come to work and feel positive as we are doing something about it!

Want a career that grows?

Build your skills in science, technology, engineering, art and maths to give yourself a chance to blossom in a career like one of these varied and exciting jobs at Kew.

You could make a real difference to the world.

For further information: www.kew.org